

## Monastic Education in Myanmar (1300 – 1750)

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### Abstract

Monasteries were the most successful education centers which taught not only reading and writing but also gave moral lessons to Myanmar boys. Education in Myanmar during the reign of Myanmar Kings was carried on almost entirely by the monks. During the Bagan period, Anawratha tried to get *Tripitaka* which became the big textbook for monastic education. The monastic school not only took care of the boy's physical, mental and moral well-being, but also prepared him to face his problems. Thus, monastic education in Myanmar was largely religious and ethical. The Teaching of Buddha was the main text. Throughout the period of Bagan dynasty, the monasteries were considered as literary banks or universities for the native people. Under the Kings of Pinya, Inwa, Sagaing, Taungoo and Nyaungyan, many learned *Sayadaws* appeared and these *Sayadaws* were presumed to have revived the system of monastic education. The teaching method and it became more particular and developed than that of Bagan period. Products of monastic schools were in high regard and respected as literati. Moreover, monastic education was the only form of education for centuries, which played a major role in fostering basic literacy among the people. Thus, the monastic education has been noted as a fruitful outcome for Myanmar people during the period under surveying.

**Keywords:** Monasteries, Monastic, Education, Sayadaw

### Introduction

Education in Myanmar took the form of traditional monastic education which was based upon Buddhist religion. During the reign of Myanmar Kings, education was carried on almost entirely by the Buddhist monks in the monasteries. Everybody, above six years old was sent to the village monasteries to learn an elementary education embracing the three “Rs” Monasteries were the most successful education centers which taught not only reading and writing but also gave moral lessons to Myanmar boys. Because of the monastic education most of the children could read and write under the Myanmar Kings. This paper examines how the system of monastic education revived from the period of Pinya, Sagaing, Inwa till to Nyaungyan Period of Myanmar. It also analyzes who played vital role in the development of monastic education. The purpose of this paper is to fulfill and to revise the earlier statements of monastic education.

### Monastic Education (1300 – 1360)

The monastic education in Myanmar is as old as Buddhism itself. Since ancient time, the monasteries had provided the national education in Myanmar. When the son of Buddhist families reached the age of six or seven, they all without exception entered the monastery and learned how to read and write while practicing religious meditation or training. In other words, every monastery in Myanmar was a school, and all sorts of education were carried out by the monks. Monasteries were the most successful education centers which taught not only reading and writing but also gave moral lesson to Myanmar boys.

Monastic Education in Myanmar was largely religious and ethical. Myanmar word “*Kyon*” stands for monastery, nunnery, and school. Regardless of race, religion, creed, gender and status of parents, pupils at monasteries received equally free education with free messing and lodging. At some monasteries an nunneries even arts, crafts and domestic science were taught. Even Myanmar kings studied their younger days. *Mangala Sutta* prescribed social and moral obligations of all human being to observe and perform regardless of their religion, race,

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creed, birth and social status and civic duties to abide by Monastic schools. This *Sutta* was taught as a basic manual for morals and civics which all pupils have to understand and learn by heart. So that they use it as guide throughout their life.

Education in Myanmar during the reign of Myanmar Kings was carried on almost entirely by the Buddhist monks in the monasteries. There were no defined grades or examinations. In the monastic schools, students were classified according to the lessons they had covered. The *Mangala Sutta* is one division of Buddhist Scriptures comprising thirty-eight Noble Blessings which bring about peace and happiness or beatitudes. These important blessings were read by boy as soon as he had mastered the rudiments of reading. (Khin Maung Kyi, U, "A survey of the History of Education in Burma before the British Conquest and after" *JBR*, XVI,ii,Dec,1963,11 (Hereafter cited as *JBR*)) This is the first test of the boy who studied at the monasteries.

The long and firm tradition of education accounted for the prevalence of high literacy rate in the country. Thus, the system of education of Myanmar Kings was entirely dependent on the wish and at the disposal and discretion of Buddhist teacher monks, who had two objects in mind:

- to perpetuate the Teachings of the Buddha,
- to inculcate the people with teaching practice and Buddhist way of life.

The monastic school not only took care of the boy's physical, mental and moral well-being, but also prepare him to face his problems. The monastic schools prepared the children for that end, so education was mainly religious and ethical. (Toe Hla, Dr, *Myanmar kyanwatsikka Nhan Luthanbhui*, Yangon, 2005, 59. (Hereafter cited as *Myanmar kyanwastikka*))

Moral Education was prescribing in every monastery. It was taught not only in the schools but also in the monastery. In fact, moral education was formally taught and the monastery by monks. It was taught not only facts and knowledge in the lessons but also thoughts, opinions, moral codes, and dignity to the students, with reference to Buddha's *Jataka* stories. (Oo Htay, *The study of Moral Education In secondary level*, Yangon Institute of the education, 2005-2006, 12 (Hereafter cited as *Moral Education*))

The teaching of Buddha were the main texts, which children learnt by heart. The monks were revered for their learning, and their advice was sought for all kinds of everyday problems. So monastic education was the only form of education for centuries, played a major role in fostering basic literacy among the people. The monks were the main teachers. The pupils need not pay either for their boarding or tuition for they too had been taken off by those seeking merit through (Dana). The objectives of monastic education were as follows:

1. To instill reverence in three Gems, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the *Sangha*
2. To be able to live in accordance with the Teaching of the Buddha especially the four-noble truth, i.e.,
  1. *Dukka sacca* –Truth of suffering
  2. *Samudaya sacca*- Truth of Origin of suffering
  3. *Nirodha sacca*- Truth of Extinction of suffering and
  4. *Magga sacca*-Truth of Path leading to the Extinction of suffering
3. To teach the 3 R's (Writing, Reading, Arithmetic)

The method of monastic education used for teaching purpose was rote-learning.(*oral Education* 6) Thus the monks tried their best to understand the Teaching of the Buddha and to practice accordingly in their monasteries. Throughout the period of Bagan dynasty, the monastic schools were considered literary banks or universities for the native peoples.( *Ibid*, 12) Every village in Myanmar had at least one monastery. Even villages which were in remote distance in the countryside had at least one monastery. The town and cities had more. The monastic education system was the most significant feature in Myanmar Social Life.( *Moaukwan, J.S, Educational Progress in Southeast Asia*, Institute of Pacific Relation New York,1943,13)

After the downfall of Bagan Empire, Myinsaing, Pinya and Sagaing Kingdom came into existence contemporarily. Among them the most organized and the most united kingdom was Pinya built in 1312 and known as the period of Pinya in Myanmar history. (Thabyan, U, *History of Education in Myanmar*, Yangon, Range Press 1972 80-81 (Hereafter cited as *History of Education*) Pinya period was growth and progress of the Buddhist *Sasana* when the Buddhist monks took up the task of teaching and learning Buddhist literature. The intellectuals and the learned *Sayadaws* from Bagan came together after the ruin of the kingdom at Pinya, Sagaing and Inwa.( Tun Pe, U, *Introduction to Myanmar*, Yangon Kyaw Winswe Press 1976,144 (Hereafter cited as *Introduction to Myanmar*)) In the period of Pinya there were many Sayadaw, famed and note for Buddhist scriptures such as *Nyanadhaza*, note for Buddhist philosophy, *Shin Gunabirama* noted for five books of *Vinaya*, *Shin Adissaransi*, *Shin Sudhamma lankara*, *Shin Varapta*, *Shin Sriponnavasi*, *Shin Nagita* who compiled the work on minor etymology and *Suetwinpyit Sayadaw*.( *History of Education*,86) These *Sayadaws* were presumed to have revived the system of monastic education free of charge, to those who wished to learn, rich or poor. These monasteries took upon themselves the task of the food and shelter of the pupils or students. During the reign of King Uzana the son of Pinya Tasishin Sihasu, big monasteries were built for the learned, and the teaching center (*Sarthin Teik*) consisting of seven building of Saga wood. It was a very famous *Sarthin Teik* where the Buddhist Texts and scriptures were taught by the accomplished elderly members of *Sangha*. They were well versed in Buddhist literature. These seven monasteries were called the seven Saga wood. This monastic establishment was grand and great edifice surrounded by six supporting monasteries. They were:

1. One monastery *Cammaka*
2. One monastery *Weluwun*
3. One monastery named *Zetawan Kyaung*
4. One monastery name *Kalar Kyaung*
5. One monastery named *Shwe Kyaung*
6. One monastery named *Einnim Kyaung*
7. One monastery named *Ton Chwan Kyaung*

It was built of Saga wood in 1340. The King donated cash and kind, and donated farm land, paddy fields, slaves and watchmen to maintain it. (*History of Education* ,85) The presiding monks and the descendant monks of seven monasteries went to Myin Saing, Inwa and Sagaing.( *Sasanalankara cantan*, 126-127) King Ngasishin, son of King Laysishin Kyaw Swa came to the throne of Pinya in 1350. During his reign Kyaw Swa, monastery was built for the *Sasana*. The presiding monk of this monastery was famous *Suetwinpyit Sayadaw*. He was very learned in *Pali*, *Atthakattha* and *Taik* (Vocabulary, meaning and explanation) and was also famous in responding to all kinds of questions. He wrote *Saddha Kyan* (Grammar). *Shin Sasanadhaza* and *Shin Parikkhama* were the two brother monks who taught the learners the Buddhist writings and they were famous as monks of *Araññavasi* (forest dweller) who practiced meditation in the forest.

Although the Bagan era came to an end, the medium of teaching in Pinya era was still *Pali* language. Religious literatures written in *Pali* were taught in the whole country. (*History of Education*, 70) There was much improvement in Myanmar language and some books were written in *Pali* explanation through monastic education. Books on *Pali* explanation had been written since middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Therefore, the medium of teaching was not only the *Pali* language but also the Myanmar language. It seems that both languages were used in teaching at the monasteries. It can be said that the monastic education emphasized the teaching of the three *Pitaka* (*Sutta*, *Vinaya*, *Abhidhamma*). (Ibid, 96-97) Therefore in the Pinya period, the member of Buddhist ordered mainly taught the Buddhist text in *Pali* and Myanmar, whereas the *Araññavasi* monks lived as forest dweller (*History of Education*, 88), and known as *Araññavasi* sect took the reasonability for monastic education concerning with secularism to the people.

The learners of *Gāmvāsī pwe kyaung* (monasteries) were the princes, the royal relatives, the son, and daughters of ordinary people. (Ibid, 69-70)

During that period the *pwe kyaung* grew like great universities where branches of literacy knowledge such as history, code of law, were taught as well as strategy, martial art and etc.

(Than Htut, U, *History of monastic education* in Myanmar, Ohnbin Press: Yangon 1980-71 (Hereafter cited as *History of Monastic Education*)) These monasteries began to teach astronomy and astrology, medicine, horsemanship, swordsmanship, archery, arts and crafts, boxing, music and dancing. (Hla Pe,U ,*Burma literature, Historiography, Scholarship, Language, life and Buddhism Mandalay Tanntawin* ,1985,195 (Hereafter cited as *Burma Literature*.) After studying at these monasteries the students continued to learn other knowledge at their surroundings. Myinsaing Nasishin himself composed two Marshal Songs for shield dance after studying at *pwe kyaung*.

King Ngasishin conferred the title of *Sirimahacaturangabala* on the wise writer, a native of Pyay Township. He was famous writer of not only *Pitaka* but also books on Buddhist literature. He also wrote *Loka Niti kyan* (book on social morale) in *Pali* verse. He presented full explanation on the philosophy of monastic education in this book. As the minister *Caturangabala* was accomplished in *Magada* and *Sanskrit* he composed great Self-commencing Dictionary in *Magada* language in the reign of King Ngasishin Kyaw Swar. (Tun Pe, U, *Introduction to Myanmar*, Yangon, Kyaw Win Swe Press, 1976,106 (Hereafter cited as *Introduction to Myanmar*)) Thus the education which started in Bagan era, improved through Pinya, Inwa and Sagaing era and flourished in Inwa era. (*History of Monastic Education* 78, It said that he was the descendant of *Gamvasi pwe Kyaung*))

### **Monastic Education (1360 – 1560)**

The dynasty of Inwa began King began with the accession of King Thadominphyia in 1364 and ended with the overthrow of King Sithu Kyaw Htin in 1555 a life span of 191 years. During that period monastic education still flourished and many learned *Sayadaws* appeared. Mingyi Sasawke who came to the throne after King Thadominphyia studied under *Sangha Raja Sayadaw*. When Mingyi Swasawke become King, he invited his teacher Sayadaw to Inwa and conferred the title of *Mahasangha Raja* (Supreme Head of *Sangha*). This *Sayadaw* wrote an article on the moral lessons, entitled *Lokathara Sonemaca*. (*History of Education* ,115) Mingyi Swasawke sent his two sons to his teacher *Ale Kyaung* for their education. It appeared at that time children were sent to the monastery to receive their education when they grew to the age over seven years. (Ibid,144) In those days there were for all class of people i.e. the king and the royal relatives, the wealthy, the King's servants and the poor but they had equal right to study at the monastery. There had no special school for the King's sons in Inwa period. They had to learn their lessons like other ordinary learners.

In Inwa, *Kantawmin Kyaung Sayadaw* (1438-1513 AD) was famous, the literature as shown by him serves as wines to standard of the monastic education of the period. The absence of central control and the absence of course of study (curriculum) there might be difference in teaching method from place to place. However, the basic principles were based on the Buddhist literature. The teaching was aimed at the uplift of social and moral conduct. The peace and prosperity of the society was aims and objective of their education. The homely and the society was the aims and objective of *Shin Mahasila Vamsa*, *Shin Maharatha Sara* and *Kantawmin Kyaung Sayadaw* in the Inwa period were followed by almost every monastery to teach the young monks and boy. (Toe Hla, Dr, *Myanma Kyanwatsikka Nhan Lutanbhui*, Yangon, 2005,77)

*Kantawmin Kyaung Sayadaw* was reputed for writing epistle (*Mettaca*). He also wrote *Lokathara Sonemaca* (homily), giving guidelines on moral and manner to cultivate a good conduct. (Dr Khin Maung Nyint, *An Outline History of Myanmar Literature*, Sapebeikman Press, Yangon 1999,38 (Hereafter cited as *An Outline History Literature*)) *Sayadaw Shin Mahasila Vamsa* was famous during the reign of second Min Khaung. (*History of Education*, 120) *Sayadaw Shin Mahasila Vama*

took up his bode at Sagaing Myo *hluparone Hluparone* pagoda built by King second *Min Kyaung* and taught from all over the country. He also wrote many books on Buddhist literature, *Pyo* poem, verse and question on them. (Win Mon, U, *Guide to Education of Inwa Period Takkasuilpanna Padesacacon* Vol II, Part I 1967 (Hereafter cited as *Education of Inwa Period*)) *Sayadaw* taught only in reference to the Buddhist *Tests*. (*Education of Inwa Period*, 194) *Sayadaw Shin Mahasila Vamsa* used to impart all his knowledge to the learners. He taught the learners as much as he knew without leaving any knowledge in him. He was able to make uneducated people understand to words of the Buddha by composing simple and easy verse and poems. He always wishes that the student, the learners must more and more learned, more educated, and more qualified than teachers. *Sayadaw* realized that it was useless to teach the students who did not understand the aim and value of education. He was very particular in his teaching, and he paid special attention to all the learners. (Ibid,195-197) He made them read the words and the sentences aloud in correct tone and pronunciation. Moreover, he made the learners write clearly, neatly, and tidily. He composed verses in which he urged the learners always to read the lessons correctly, to write the words on the palm leaves neatly and to study each sentence till they came to understand them very well. He took aims to teach the learners, and his view in education changed Inwa era to some extent. (Ibid ,200)

*Shin Maharatha Sara* was famous in education of Inwa Period and the two *Sayadaw Shin Mahasila Vamsa* and *Shin Mharatha Sara* were the two prominent figures in Myanmar literature. (*History of Education*,77) *Sayadaw Shin Maharatha Sara* of Inwa wrote in his verse:

Young learners must study their lessons keeping  
in mind the meaning of the eight Myanmar

Alphabets Thu (*Suneya* He must listen) -Si<sup>4</sup> (*Seinteya* He must think) -Pu (*Poccheya* He must be inquisitive or seek information) -Bar (*Bhaseya* He must speak) -Wi (*Vicareya* He must investigate) -Li (*Likhheya* He must write) -Thi (*Sikkheya* He must learn) -Dar (*Dhareya* He must recite (take by hear)).

They must work hard in their study and everything must be learnt by rote. Then they will come to know the advantages of learning and they will be surely famous in life. During the Age of Inwa the great effort of *Sayadaw Shin Maharatha Sara*, his the contemporary of *Shin Manasila Vansa* for the growth and development in the field of education is of great significant. The *Sayadaw* let his disciple learn by writing numerous words. The, *Sayadaw* worked day and night to teach both lay and monk. The thoughts and principles of the *Sayadaw* could be seen clearly and vividly in verses of admonition known as *Lakthiktaungta Sonmaca*. The *Sayadaw* strived hard for the growth and progress of Myanmar literature. (*History of Monastic Education*,78)

The venerable *Sayadaw Ariyavamsa* stood head and shoulders above the other scholar of the Inwa period. He was learned and in his quest for knowledge, he was full of humility. He composed in the old scholarly tradition in *Pali*, many commentaries or “*Tika*” on a famous words such as *Manisara-Manjusa*, a *Tika* on the *Abhidhammattha -Vibhavani*, and *Mandipa*, another “*Taik*” on the *Atthasalini of Buddhaghosa*, and he was a pioneer the *Abhidhammattha -Vihavani*, and *Manidipa*, another like, on the *Atthasalini of Buddhaghosa*, and he was a pioneer the learning in breaking into two new areas: he made a study of the *Jataka*, called the *Jataka Withaw Dana* and dealing with a section of the *Sutta-Pitaka*. (*Burma Literature*,203)

During that period the new verse forms “*Pyo*”, “*E-Khyan*”, “*Mawkun*” and “*Mettaca*” of course, *Lanka* and *Ratu* were continued to be written with better construction and finer expression. Monastic education and the contribution of learned monks, the literature of Inwa period achieved much progress in extent and depth. (*An Outline History of Literature*, 31) Thus, we find that the main aim of education in Inwa period was to build up teacher’s moral character, to promote their level of intelligence and to achieve the learner’s all round development. So that they would be able to create desirable situations in the society leading to the peaceful and prosperous country. This education provided the learners with the skills in both social and religious affairs. (*Education of Inwa Period*, 194-195)

The method of teaching in Inwa was the same as those of Bagan and Pinya. Only the facts of the Buddhist literatures were emphasized, and method was the rote learning method, but it is become more particular and developed than that of Bagan period. (*History of Education*, 93) There was much improvement in Myanmar language, and the standard of Myanmar literature was at its highest in Inwa. (*History of Education*, 93)

During that period, the learned persons who were well-versed in both *Pali* and Myanmar language, wrote many books on the Buddhist religion in simple. *Pali* language as well as in simple Myanmar language including easy explanations. They gained experience in teaching the *Pali* literature, and the method of teaching become effective. (*History of Education*, 127)

The period of 160 year from 1364 to 1562 the Age of Inwa was long period of peace and prosperity. (*History of Education higher level*, Yangon, Zeyatherkha Press, 2000, 21) During this period the monastic education continued to flourish. (*History of Monastic Education*, 71-75) The Age of Inwa saw the Golden Age of the monastic education. Found in the literature were the systematic teaching of literature, principles of education disciplines and course of study. (*History of Education basic level*, Yangon, 2004, Government of Myanmar Ministry of Education) Prominent during the Age of Inwa were *Sayadaw Shin Uttamakyau* and *Shin Maharasila Vamsa*. The principle of education and the aim and object of education can be found in their work of literature. (*History of Monastic Education*, 77)

*Shin Maharatha Sara* and *Shin Mahasila Vamsa*, two prominent persons of great literary fame let the role of education of Inwa so far as literature is concerned. The Kings honored and encouraged, and the interest of the people were also keenly drawn to the matters of religion and language and literature. (Bode MH, the *Pali literature of Burma*, Luzc and Co. Ltd, 1966, 47) *Shin Uttamagyaw*, *Shin Mahasila Vamsa*, *Shin Maharatha Sara* and *Shin Eindagutta* were studious pursuit of *Pali* and *Sanskrit* works. They turned *Pali* works into the work of Myanmar for the sake of easy study in this period.

### **Monastic Education (1560 - 1750)**

Taking advantage of the weakness of Inwa throne and absence of peace and prevalence of disorder and lack of stability MIngyi Nyo was able to organize and unite the areas including Kyaukse. Following the size of Inwa by the Shans in 1527 several Myanmar leaders sought refuge at Taungoo which was relieved of the ravage of war, so in 1551 the second empire of Myanmar came to be united again. This period when the whole city was united is known as the age of Taungoo from 1551. (Hall, DGE, *Burma, London, Hutchin Son's*, University Library 1998, 38)

The venerable *Sayadaws* and their teaching method of Inwa continued to the Taungoo period. (*History of Education*, 80) It may therefore be said that the conception of *Shin Mahasila Vamsa* and *Shin Maharatha Sara* followed the *Sayadaw* of Taungoo period. *Tisanadhaza* continued to learn the Buddhist *Texts* and scriptures in Taungoo. After *Shin Saddhamakitti Sayadaw* passed away *Shin Tisasaadhaza* continued to learn under the great venerable *Maha Thera* to become the prominent *Thera* of that period. It is found that during the age of Taungoo the Myanmar literature grew along with the monastic education. (Maung Thura, *Biography of writers*, Yangon Shumawa Press 1963, 192 (Hereafter cited as *biography of writers*)) During this period not only writing and reading of Myanmar language but also Buddhist scriptures of *Pali* Text were learnt. (*Biography of writers*, 129) In the matter of education during the age of Taungoo the Buddhist monks continued to play the leading role though there was the growth in number of lay scholars.

During the reign of Tabinshwehti, Hanthawaddy Bago became the Royal city of Myanmar, being the center of administration education and culture as well. The education of Myanmar grew and developed in great momentum. The scholar monks from Inwa and Taungoo in Upper Myanmar gathered at Hanthawaddy and consequently there was the great growth of education of Myanmar. In the reign of Bayinnaung in view of the uplift of the prestige of *Sangha* in support of education based on Buddhism Buddhist monks were ordained

at the *Kalyani Sima Hall*. Monasteries were built in every parts of Myanmar to learn the Buddhist Text and Buddhist scriptures having invited the learned *Sayadaws*. (*History of Myanmar literature*,115)

The education system of Taungoo was based on the *Tripitaka* as in the time of Bagan, Pinya and Inwa having Buddhist as the fundamental faith with *Pali* as the medium of learning. From the study of literature of Taungoo it may be understood that the various subjects such as code of law, medicine, history, and fortunetelling and so on were also taught in the Buddhist monasteries where Buddhist literature was mainly pursued. (*History of Education*,145)

It may also be well presumed that the subject of history was also taught in the monasteries of Taungoo. Bayinnaug also honoured Bibbyadala, the Mon wiseman by conferring upon him the position of Minister. He was highly accomplished, though of Mon, not only in Mon and *Pali* but in Myanmar as well. A great work on history in Mon Known also as *Rajadarit Ayetawpon* was translated into Myanmar by Binnyadala, the great Minister. (Ibid,147) This indicates that during the Taungoo Period not only *Pali* and Mon were taught at the Buddhist monasteries is lower Myanmar but the subject of Myanmar and history were jointly taught also.

The poet composer of Taungoo not being the monks as at the Age of Inwa, they were not so much enthusiastic of the spiritual matters. The poet of Taungoo being young and growing up in the royal court their poems, classical songs etc. are so much inclined to royal custom and royal tradition. It appears that they received their elementary education in the monasteries and then continued to learn personally and practically other branches of knowledge. This is the reason as to why they composed mostly *E-Khyan* and Mawkwan. (*History of Education* ,147)

During the reign of King Bayinnaung the twenty governors (the minor lords) of Bayinnaung had to build Buddhist monasteries and dedicated to the learned *Sayadaw* invited all over the country. It is known that the three *Pitakas* and scriptures had to be written and copied on Ink inscription and palm leaves and donated to the teacher *Sayadaw*. Thus, the monastic education of Myanmar continued to develop because of support and encouragement of both Kings, the minor lords, and the subjects. (Pe Maung Tin, U, *History of Myanmar Literature*, Yangon , *Thidimaying* , Press, 2003,164-165 (Hereafter cited as *History of Myanmar Literature*))

In the reign of King Nyaungyan (*Mahasahasura*) and successive Kings there also arose a number of lay and monk scholars. (*In Outline History of Literature*, 136) In such a short time Myanmar literature along with *Pali* literature reached the high standard of the level of development. (Tin Nyo, U, *Great Chronicle (New) Nyaungyansat* Vol-III, Yangon, Khineycanan Office ,1977, 68) The aim and objective throughout the era of Nyaungyan were:

1. To keep the five Infinities above the head
2. To be restrained in deed, in word, and in mind
3. To be of good moral character, bright, polite, and wise
4. To be competent proficient, and efficient in modern secular branches of knowledge.

(*History of Education, (30 years programme, prospect of Education)*, Yangon, 2001, 85)

During the age of Nyaungyan *Pali* was taught as main subject in the monasteries as the age of Bagan, Pinya, Inwa and Taungoo. This can be known from the study of the works composed by the great *Sayadaws* of that age. It may also be found at Myanmar literature was taught *Pali* was main subject of learning. (*History of Education* ,190) From the system of joint education of *Pali* and Myanmar it may be noticed that the system of education of that period was for the promotion of Myanmar Language. (*Biography of writers*, 188) The subjects of the monastic education gave priority in learning to these subjects etymology, chan (the rule of composition) classical songs, lyric sub-commentary, *Abhidhamma* and *Vinaya*, the code of laws, tales, history, kalat work and so on. Thus, the works on fortune telling were given priority in learning. (Ibid ,188)

The study of these works shows that the Myanmar literature was much higher in growth and development in the period of Bagan, Pinya and Inwa. It is also assumed that such literature was taught in the monasteries *Shin Jambudhaja*, the *Pakhangyi Shwe Umin Sayadaw* was contemporary of Tonphila Sayadaw who wrote the word by word translation of five books of *Vinaya*, *Pali Canon* and commentaries, King Thalun conferred the title of *Jambudipadhaja* upon the *Sayadaw*. (Nyi Nyi, Dr , *Lutupannare Moaukwan*, Yangon Myawaddy Press, 1977,115)

In 1617 Minyekyawswa built a four-storeyed Sagaing *Myitna* monastery (Ibid, 195) known also as *Yatanavima* monastery. (Ibid,197) Which was donated in 1621 to *Shin Munindagkosa*, there would be *Tonphila Sayadaw*, who was conferred with the title of *Tipitakarlinkara* by *Anaukbatlun* King. The *Sayadaw* also compiled the story of *Yasavattana* on request of King Minyekyawswa the donor of the monastery. (*Biography of writers*, 188) The *Sayadaws* accompanied King Anaukpatlun in his march to Salyin and Hanthawaddy.

While he resided in the Royal capital of Hanthawaddy King *Thalun* discussed at the *Shwemawdaw* Pagoda precincts on *Dhamma literature* with the Mon *Sayadaw*. (*History of Education*, 190-191) *Tonphil Sayadaw* pursued not only the teaching of the Buddhist Text and scriptures but also worked on secular and spiritual literature. He composed many *Pyo* and translation works on Buddhist literature. (*Sasanalankara Catans* 166-170)

The works of *Sayadaw* included treatise on religion to secular and spiritual matter. Form this we may conclude that the system of education on Nyaungyan as prevailing at the period embraced a wide range of variety of branched of knowledge. The *Manu Sara Shwemyin* code of law was the first of its kind written in Myanmar language. Although there was *Dhammasat* treatises compiled before Nyaungyan Period.

Thus, it can be said that the Nyaungyan period (1597-1752) had many capable monk-writers as well as laymen writers working on the literature on religion. All the *Nissaya* treatises were the works of monk-writers. The learned monks translated the *Pali Pitaka* helps to understand Buddhism. (Thuza Moe, *History of Myanmar Literature In the Nyaungyan Period (1597-1752)* submitted to the History Department, Yangon University for the fulfillment of Ph-D Degree,2003 (Hereafter cited as *Nyaungyan Period*)) The translated treatises in this period are;

<i>Abhidhamma</i>	<i>Nissaya</i>	20 texts
<i>Vinaya</i>	<i>Nissaya</i>	14 texts
<i>Sutta 2</i>	<i>Nissaya</i>	4 texts

Therefore, the rise of monk and lay scholars during the period of Nyaungyan originated in the monastic education of course there was the advent of secular literature like *Pyo*, *Poem*, *E-Khyan* and code of law. However, the education basically was monastic. In accordance with circumstances prevailing at that time there arose the popular literature. But only the monastic education played the leading role so far as the system of education of Nyaungyan is concerned. And the Myanmar language was leading of learning and the monastic education and reached high level of all-round development.

### Findings

The intellectuals and the learned *Sayadaws* from Bagan came together after the ruin of the Kingdom at Pinya, Inwa, and Sagaing. In this period, there were many *Sayadaws* famed and noted in the Buddhist scriptures. These *Sayadaws* were presumed to have revived the system of monastic education of Pinya, Sagaing and Inwa. These monasteries continued to provide education free of charge, to those who wished to learn, rich or poor. Although Bagan era was still *Pali* language. Moreover, *Gamavasi Pwai Kyon*: took responsibilities of the education of the country. The learner of *Gamavasi Pwai Kyon*: were the princes, the royal relatives, the son and daughters of ordinary people. During the age of Taungoo the Myanmar Literature grew along with the monastic education. In the matter of education during the age of Taungoo the Buddhist monks continued to play the leading role though there was the growth in

number of lay schools. The Nyaungyan period had many capable monk writers as well as laymen writers working on the literature on religion. The rise of monk and lay scholars during the period of Nyaungyan originated in the monastic education.

### Conclusion

There were many learned *Sayadaws*, famed and noted in the Buddhist scriptures during the period under surveying. Big monasteries were built for the learning, and teaching. There was much improvement in Myanmar language and some books were written in *Pali* explanation. The age of Inwa was long period of peace and prosperity and saw the golden age of the Buddhist literature. Prominent learned Sayadaws were arose who famous in Myanmar literature. The principle of education can be found in their work of literature. Because of their effort Myanmar grew along with the monastic education.

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